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STATEMENT BY MR. GUIDO RODRIGUES
MEMBER OF THE PORTUGUESE PARLIAMENT
BEFORE THE UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR DECOLONIZATION

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Once again is the problem of the non-self-governing territory of East Timor, before the UN Committee for Decolonization, aterritory to which it the right to self-determination has been denied for many years, and where an invading state has perpetrated continuing massacres and disregard for the most elementary human rights.

On behalf of the Social Democratic Party in the Assembleia da República of Portugal (Portuguese Parliament), I submit to you this matter which is a painful one for us and for the East Timorese.

As it is widely known, Indonesia invaded the territory of East Timor in December 1975 and annexed it by force in July 1976.

The Indonesian sovereignty in East Timor has never been recognized by the United Nations, as it is proved by various resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Continuing appeals to restore the international law in this non-autonomous territory, which is under Portuguese administration, have been refused and hindered by dilatory actions, attempts at imposing a "fait accompli" and indiscriminate use of force by Indonesia.

Thus, besides invoking baseless legal pretexts the occupying power has violently acted against the people of East Timor which has rejected the situation imposed on it. This can be demonstrated by the thousands of Timorese who died in their struggle against the invader and who were also the victims of the famine and illness, that spread over the territory.

The continuing use of force reached its peak on 12th November 1991 with the massacre by the invading forces against civilians who were demonstrating in the Santa Cruz cemetery, of which resulted the death of approximately 100 Timorese, an untold number of missing people and the continuing arrest of many people who were later brought to trial.

The international awareness of this massacre, the horrible scenes shown by the media all over the world provoked a general repulse which forced the Indonesian authorities to recognize the disregard for human rights and to decide to take into court the officers responsible for this violent acts. They have simultaneously sentenced and condemned the Timorese who had been arrested after the events of 12th November.

I would like to draw your attention to the following paradox: few responsible officers were condemned to light penalties which the public opinion does not know whether they will be served or if it was only a masquerade to be seen by the world; the victims, approximately 20 (among them several declared their Portuguese citizenship), were condemned to severe penalties, one of which perpetual imprisonment. No comments. The report of the International Amnesty issued this month is a touching evidence of what happened. I personally listened to Timorese students, arrested at that time and who managed to leave the country, who told me how they were submitted to ill-treatment and torture be the Indonesian authorities. I cannot obviously reveal their names.

It would not be necessary to go into further details on the situation still prevailing in East Timor, but I believe that the continuous oppression endured by the people can be shown through the declarations made last week by the officer responsible for the Indonesian forces of occupation in East Timor, stating that he

would act the same way or more violently if other demonstrations were to take place in the territory.

Several initiatives have been taken in order to make Indonesia comply with international law and human rights and to solve the problem of East Timor, namely:

- The European Community and its member States condemned vehemently the violence in December 1991, making the cooperation relationship of the Community with Indonesia depend on the Indonesian response to international concern.

- The consensus declaration approved in Geneva on 4th March, by the U.N. Commission for the Human Rights, which requested Indonesia to take a number of measures to improve the human rights situation and expressed the support to the UN Secretary-General, in order to reach a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to question of East Timor. Indonesia has failed completely to comply with this declaration.

- A proposal conveyed by Portugal to the UN Secretary-General for a dialogue with Indonesia and with representatives of the East Timorese people, without pre-conditions aiming at the settlement of the situation with due respect for the rights and the will of the East Timorese people.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I would like to make it quite clear that my country does not have any neo-colonial interest in this matter.

However, it is bound to fulfil its responsibilities as the administering power of the non-self-governing territory of East Timor. And it will fulfil them until an acceptable settlement for this problem is reached. Meanwhile it will draw the world's attention to the suffering of that people and it will take any possible initiatives in accordance with international law, in view of upholding their rights.

You are a privileged body of the United Nations. You can play a decisive role in this matter. Thus, as petitioner I hope to have brought to your attention the following objectives which should be pursued:

- Full respect for human rights of the people of East Timor by the occupying forces.

- Immediate release of the Timorese imprisoned in Dili and Jakarta who were condemned exclusively for political reasons and non-violent activities.

- Immediate start of dialogue between Portugal, Indonesia and representatives of the East Timorese, which will lead to the exercise of the right to self-determination by the East Timorese people thus respecting its freely expressed will whatever it will be.

In 1992, there are still several non-self-governing territories in the world which are the subject to your attention.

I am quite certain that no other cause is more just than the one I have presented to you. I am also quite certain that no other people suffers more than the one from that remote island.

I am therefore expecting your support to defend their rights in this process.